

TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – WESTWOOD COLLEGE

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends a status change under the Degree Authorization Act for Westwood College from “Full Authorization” to “Probationary Authorization” due to a probation order issued by its accreditation agency.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act, which sets out the terms under which certain types of institutions¹ may offer degrees or degree credits.

The Commission administers the Degree Authorization Act by determining an institution’s eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. Policy requires Commission action for institutions to be authorized at any level and for any change to authorization status.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

At the December 2, 2010 regular CCHE meeting, Commissioners voted to defer action for Westwood College until staff had received notification from the Accrediting Commission for Career Colleges and Schools. Department staff received a “Continued Probation Order” from the ACCSC on December 9, 2010. The ACCSC reviewed the September 1, 2010 Probation Order and the school’s response to that action at its November 2010 meeting. It was determined that the school has not demonstrated compliance with the ACCSC’s requirements relative to student achievement outcomes. Additionally, Westwood College was requested to provide information with regard to compliance to several and various state agencies and other accreditors given the allegations of the Government Accountability Office August 4, 2010 report.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission change the status of Westwood College from Full Authorization to Probationary Authorization in response to the accreditation body’s continued probation order.

¹ (1) Colorado publicly supported colleges and universities; (2) properly accredited private colleges and universities; (3) postsecondary seminaries and bible colleges; and (4) private occupational schools authorized by the Division of Private Occupational Schools.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3 (5) (b)